



The History of the Police in the United States

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Presented by: Black Women for Wellness

1636

Night Watch

- Started in Boston, then expanded to the other colonies
- Untrained part-time volunteers that were not effective in crime control
 - Often drank and slept, while on duty

1636

System of Constables

- Evolved from Night Watch
- Individuals were appointed or elected at the local level
- Paid through a fee system for warrants they served

1704

Slave Patrol

- First formal slave patrol was created in Carolina colonies
 - Created to manage conflicts among slaves, but specifically to maintain control over the slave population
- First publicly funded police in the American South

Slave patrols captured runaway slaves, punished slaves that violated the rules, and quelled uprisings. Does this remind you of modern day policing?

1789

U.S. Marshals Service

- **First federal law enforcement agency created**
 - **The U.S. Marshals provided local representation for the federal government**
- **Duties:**
 - **Support federal courts**
 - **Carry out all lawful orders**

1800s

Industrial Revolution Began

- **Increase numbers of immigrants began to arrive in the U.S.**
 - **Cities became increasingly crowded**
- **Clashes among the original settlers and immigrants began, leading to an increase in crime and need for police**

1800s

Era of City Political Machines

- **Police and political officials developed close ties**
- **Police were hired by politicians and powerful individuals**
- **First known cases of police corruption**

1829

Sir Robert Peel

- Introduced a bill for improving the police in London to manage social conflicts in growing urban and industrialized areas
- This bill influenced the modern American Police

1838

Boston, Massachusetts

- The first official modern police department was started in Boston, MA
- Created to help protect the property and goods of the large shipping commercial center and businesses

1880

Police Departments

- Almost every major city in the U.S. has created a police force
- Primary duty was to prevent crime and keep order

**How do you feel when
police are around? Do you
feel safe?**

1900s

August Vollmer

- **Berkeley's first police chief and founder of Berkeley's criminology department**
- **Pushed for police reform to be a profession that was a public service to improve society**

1922

August Vollmer

- Vollmer used an early version of a computer to identify locations with high crimes. Then placed police in those areas, to deter future crime
- This is known as hot spot policing

1964

S.W.A.T (Special Weapons and Tactics)

- Formed by Daryl F. Gates in Los Angeles in response to the deadly Watts Rebellion
- S.W.A.T. is a group of highly trained police units that was meant for emergency situations
- Some people would consider this to be the birth of militarization in American policing

Qualified Immunity

1967

- **A doctrine that grants government officials from:**
 - **Being held liable for constitutional violations when they are performing their duties reasonably**
 - **Holds officials accountable when they exercise their power irresponsibly.**

**Is Qualified Immunity
protecting those that need
it? Or is it just a shield to
protect those that abuse
their power?**

1969

S.W.A.T (Special Weapons and Tactics)

- First major raid targeted the Black Panthers
- 350 officers took on 13 Black Panthers
- Explosions were detonated and tanks were brought in for reinforcements

1969

S.W.A.T (Special Weapons and Tactics)

- **“In its Panther deployment, SWAT was transformed from a tool of surgical precision into a blunt-force battering ram, and that’s ultimately how it would find its calling in police departments across the country — especially in African American communities.”**

-Los Angeles Times

1990

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

- Authorized Department of Defense to transfer excess property to federal, state and local law enforcement agencies

**Tanks and military grade
weapons. How is using this
type of force on protestors
needed?**

1994

Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act

- **Increased funding for 100,000 new police officers, prisons and prevention programs.**
- **Mandated life sentences for those that have been convicted of a violent felony after two or more prior convictions**
 - **Also known as the "three-strikes" provision**

1997

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

- **Granted permanent authority to Secretary of Defense to transfer defense materials to federal, state and local law enforcement agencies**

2001

September 11, 2001

- Post-911 led police departments to include Counter-terrorism
 - Using an all-crimes approach
 - With the existing crime fighting framework, it added terrorism and high risk threats to be screened for possible connections with larger -scale terrorism or other crimes

2002

Stop and Frisk

- 2002 -2013
 - New York's Stop and Frisk Policy
 - NYCLU revealed:
 - Black and Latinx communities were disproportionately affected
 - 9 out of 10 times the individual were innocent

How do you think being constantly subjected to stop and frisk, affects a young child mentally?

2012

Trayvon Martin

- **17 year old African American boy that was fatally shot in Sanford, Florida by George Zimmerman**
- **George Zimmerman was acquitted for Trayvon Martin's murder**

2013

Black Lives Matter

- **Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi created Black Lives Matters in response to Trayvon Martin's murder**

Black Lives Matter Mission Statement

2013

- **“To eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives.”**

- Black Lives Matter

2013

Stop and Frisk

- A New York judge ruled that Stop and Frisk policy to be **unconstitutional**
- Evidence showed that officers were disproportionately targeting people of color

Have you ever called the police? If so, was the situation resolved as you had hoped or did it escalate?

2014

Michael Brown

- On August 9, 2014, an 18 year old Black man was shot by a White Police Officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri

2014

Michael Brown's Death Led to:

- **Increase awareness on police brutality**
- **Increase use of body cameras on law enforcements nationwide**
- **President Obama announced that federal government will use 75 million dollars for cameras**

2020

George Floyd

- On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed in police custody for allegedly using a counterfeit bill, when police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Police Officer, Derek Chauvin, knelt on George Floyd's neck for nearly 8 minutes and 46 seconds , and with two other officers restraining him on the ground

2020

George Floyd

- His death was ruled as a homicide
 - Per Hennepin County Medical examine: “Cardiopulmonary arrest complicating law enforcement subdual, restraint and neck compression.”
 - Private Autopsy: Rule cause of death to be mechanical asphyxia

2020

George Floyd

- **Catalyze a strong response worldwide that led to protests that took place on the streets and social media**
- **A push for abolishment or reform of the Police in the United States**

**If the police force does not
evolve now, then when?
And at what cost?**

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